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UNDP COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION POLICY

Report of the Administrator

Summary

The present report outlines progress achieved in implementing the UNDP communication and advocacy strategy, approved in July 1995 by the UNDP Strategy and Management Committee. It also provides information on steps taken to address the various issues covered by decision 96/22. With regard to the UNDP publications policy, the information contained in the present report will be supplemented by a conference room paper to be presented to the Executive Board at the current session. The conference room paper will reflect the outcome of ongoing consultations within UNDP and of further informal consultations with the Executive Board before the annual session. The Administrator will provide information on the cost of the production and distribution of UNDP publications to be funded within the budget for the biennium 1998-1999, which will be presented to the Board at the third regular session 1997.

I. UNDP COMMUNICATION AND ADVOCACY STRATEGY

1. In July 1995, UNDP approved its first communication and advocacy strategy, which aimed to raise public awareness and appreciation of UNDP activities within the larger framework of the United Nations role in development. The strategy was developed within the context of the implementation of the initiatives for change, adopted by the Executive Board in its decision 94/14, aimed at supporting national efforts to realize sustainable human development (SHD).

2. Developed by the Division of Public Affairs (DPA), the strategy resulted from extensive mapping and analysis of data collected through internal and external consultations with UNDP Liaison Offices, UNDP Resident Representatives/United Nations Resident Coordinators, the Department of Public Information (DPI) and United Nations agencies, media representatives from donor and programme countries and members of civil society organizations (CSOs). Main areas covered are: (a) building internal capacity for public information and advocacy; (b) extending outreach to the media; (c) strengthening advocacy and building partnerships; and (d) production and distribution of publications.

3. Before presenting results achieved in the implementation of the strategy, it is useful to indicate the institutional framework in which it is set. Several UNDP units have specific public information responsibilities: DPA in New York; the European Office in Geneva; and Liaison Offices in Brussels, Copenhagen, Tokyo and Washington. At the same time, the Human Development Report Office (HDRO) and the Office of Development Studies (ODS) issue publications and undertake other activities to stimulate development dialogue; the Office for Evaluation and Strategic Planning (OESP) publishes reports on UNDP development experiences; regional bureaux, the Bureau for Programme Policy Support and the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries, as well as UNDP country offices and UNDP-administered special funds and programmes undertake communication and advocacy as a part of their programme work. (See annex I for list of UNDP offices with communication and advocacy responsibilities.)

4. Progress in implementing the strategy in the areas of (a) building internal capacity for public information and advocacy, (b) extending outreach to the media and (c) strengthening advocacy and building partnerships is reported in paragraphs 5-10. Given the emphasis placed on publications in decision 96/22, this aspect of the strategy will be reported on separately under Section III, below.

A. Increasing internal capacity for public information and advocacy

5. Efforts are being made to improve the capacities of UNDP staff to carry out their communication and advocacy functions, especially personnel in the 134 country offices. To this end:

(a) UNDP has appointed a public affairs officer in nearly every country office;

(b) Public affairs training has been conducted for resident representatives, deputy resident representatives and/or public affairs officers in every region;

(c) More than 100 UNDP country offices have drawn up communication and advocacy strategies designed to build support for the work of the United Nations and UNDP within the country, and among international donors. These strategies stress the promotion of SHD and poverty eradication, as well as the projection of a positive and coherent image of the United Nations system as a whole;

(d) DPA has instituted a weekly news bulletin, UNDP FLASH!, to improve the exchange of information within UNDP. It is distributed electronically in Arabic, English, French, Japanese, Russian and Spanish to all country and liaison offices, posted on the Internet and sent to selected media.

6. In countries that have both a United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) and a UNDP office, public affairs and advocacy activities are coordinated so that the United Nations is seen to speak with one voice. Projection of a unified image is facilitated by the full integration of UNDP and UNIC offices in 15 countries and designation of the UNDP Resident Representative/United Nations Resident Coordinator as head of UNIC in another 13 countries. Many UNDP and UNIC offices work together to produce United Nations family booklets and/or periodic newsletters, and to celebrate major United Nations days and events. A UNDP-DPI working group meets regularly in New York on questions relating to further UNDP-UNIC integration.

B. Extending outreach to the media

7. UNDP is working to build relationships of trust with national media and with representatives of international media who are locally-based, through press conferences and briefings, workshops on specific topics, launches of major publications and the facilitation of visits to project sites. One-on-one interviews with media are arranged for the Administrator and other senior UNDP officials. Major speeches are widely distributed to media organizations.

8. UNDP seeks to generate effective coverage of the annual Human Development Report (HDR) by organizing an embargoed global launch simultaneously in several world capitals, and by conducting individual country launches and workshops in different regions. Following the launch, the HDR serves as a reference point for debate in various development forums reported upon by the press.

9. Special efforts are made to increase radio and television coverage of UNDP, through:

(a) The UNDP half-hour television documentary series, AZIMUTHS, produced ten times a year and aired in over 180 countries through agreements with more than 65 broadcasters;

(b) 30-second public-service announcements and video press releases, widely distributed to broadcasters;

(c) Mobilization of radio and television coverage of the launch of the HDR, UNDP work in crisis areas and special United Nations days.

C. Strengthening advocacy and building partnerships

10. Recognizing that advocacy and strong partnerships are crucial to the future of UNDP, the organization is undertaking outreach activities with a number of traditional and non-traditional partners. Specific activities include:

(a) Organizing conferences on such themes as governance and gender with leading institutions of higher learning (e.g., the London School of Economics and Political Science, Yale University);

(b) Establishing or strengthening ties with the worldwide official network of parliamentarians;

(c) Building alliances for UNDP in its fight against poverty, (e.g., through human development partnerships developed with European donor countries; creation of the World Alliance of Cities Against Poverty, which 76 cities have now joined; mobilization of soccer players and Olympic athletes to sign an anti-poverty pledge);

(d) Outreach to the private sector (e.g., through the 1996 Paul Hoffman Lecture on global competitiveness and human development).

II. PUBLICATIONS POLICY

11. Publications are important tools which UNDP uses for three purposes: (a) advocacy; (b) to stimulate and inform practice and dialogue on development theory for the attainment of SHD; and (c) to report to stakeholders and the public at large. The communication and advocacy strategy calls for the production of a limited number of high-quality publications.

A. Types of publications produced

12. UNDP publications fall into three broad categories:

(a) Materials to stimulate development dialogue, written by scholars, academicians and practitioners to advance debate on key issues of concern to UNDP, its programme countries and donors (e.g., Human Development Report; ODS series on development issues);

(b) Public information materials that provide basic information on UNDP in general, or on particular projects or programmes. These are intended for broad audiences (e.g., government officials and parliamentarians in donor and programme countries; actual or potential development partners worldwide, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and CSOs, academia, trade unions, the business community and chambers of commerce; media; etc. (e.g., Illustrated Annual Report). At headquarters, general materials of this type are issued by

DPA while those reporting on specific programmes or projects are issued by UNDP Bureaux or Divisions. Country offices may also issue such materials;

(c) Programme tools, produced to promote or advance specific concepts, projects or programmes, to provide development guidelines in a particular area or to offer lessons learned. At headquarters such materials are produced by the concerned unit. In the field, they are issued as part of the work of a particular programme or project (e.g., MicroStart Guide; OESP evaluation studies).

13. An inventory of all UNDP publications produced over the past two years has been prepared. Only a very few UNDP publications are produced on a recurring basis, for example, UNDP FLASH! (weekly news bulletin); CHOICES (UNDP quarterly flagship magazine); Illustrated Annual Report; periodic newsletters issued by some units (see annex II). Most publications are issued on a one-time-only basis to put forth innovative development ideas or to provide information on and/or build support for a specific UNDP programme.

14. In mid-1996 it was decided that all UNDP publications should project a strong, unified visual image. The graphic style already used in the UNDP flagship publication, CHOICES, and in OESP publications, was chosen as the UNDP-wide standard.

B. UNDP Publications Board

15. To ensure coordination of UNDP-wide publishing efforts, UNDP has set up a Publications Board. Each UNDP Bureau and Division was invited to designate one member and one alternate to the Board, which was constituted in August 1994 and held its first meeting on 14 September of that year. The Board agreed to its terms of reference (see annex III) and determined to work to ensure that UNDP publications would meet high quality standards in terms of their content and appearance.

16. By the end of February 1997, 16 meetings of the Publication Board had been held and some 35 publications had been reviewed in addition to two series of publications (from ODS and OESP). They ranged from programme guidelines and brochures designed for advocacy on behalf of a particular project or programme to issue papers intended to stimulate dialogue and public information products highlighting goals and achievements.

17. Recommendations of the Publication Board have included suggestions to: (a) revise content; (b) adjust design to comply with guidelines on use of the UNDP logo and/or present a better image for UNDP; (c) add language versions; (d) increase accessibility through production of a larger number of copies; and (e) improve distribution so that the publication will reach a larger and more clearly identified target audience.

18. The Publications Board receives updates on the implementation of the UNDP communication and advocacy strategy from its Chairman, the Director of the Division of Public Affairs. It has also discussed electronic publishing and approved the interim guidelines for Internet publishing.

III. LINGUISTIC BALANCES, ACCESSIBILITY AND ELECTRONIC DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION AND ADVOCACY MATERIALS

A. Linguistic balances

19. Most general publications are issued in the three working languages of UNDP: English, French and Spanish. Other language versions (e.g., Arabic, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian) may be produced either on demand or for specific projects involving particular target audiences.

20. Materials on specialized topics produced at headquarters are generally issued in English, and in the language(s) commonly used in the countries covered by the originating unit (e.g., French and Portuguese for the Regional Bureau for Africa; Spanish for the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean; Arabic for the Regional Bureau for Arab States; Russian for the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States).

21. Publications produced by country offices are usually issued in one of the UN working languages, or in dual-language versions, as appropriate.

22. Linguistic balances are also taken into consideration in implementing the advocacy and media dimensions of the strategy. For example, UNDP offices in Brussels, Copenhagen and Geneva help to organize numerous seminars in Europe on SHD, poverty and other topics that are conducted in national languages. Efforts are made to organize media interviews for resident representatives when they visit their home countries; and to ensure a linguistic match between UNDP staff briefers and visitors to UNDP offices. Journalists' trips organized from various capitals include reporters representing media organizations that publish in many languages, including Arabic, French, German, Japanese, Nordic languages and Spanish. The AZIMUTHS monthly television magazine, 30-second television spots and video press releases are all produced in English, French and Spanish.

B. Accessibility of publications

23. UNDP distributes its publications in several ways:

(a) Bulk copies of publications produced at headquarters are sent to country offices and UNICs in the appropriate language version, with a note explaining the purpose of the publication and suggesting categories of local recipients to whom it should be distributed. Bulk copies are also sent to liaison offices for distribution in the geographical areas they cover;

(b) Copies are sent to individuals whose names are on the UNDP mailing list, consisting of some 30,000 recipients coded by geographical region, organizational affiliation, subject interest and language preference. Individualized distribution is coordinated with the European and liaison offices to avoid duplication;

(c) Copies are handed out at major conferences, briefings, Executive Board meetings and other such venues. Publications distributed in this way have

helped to raise the UNDP profile at major international conferences such as the World Summit on Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and HABITAT II.

24. The great majority of UNDP publications are available free of charge and the organization does not presently have any mechanism for commercializing its publications. Those that are available for sale are distributed through outside publishers/distributors equipped to handle marketing and sales transactions, such as Oxford University Press (Human Development Report) or the Sales Section of United Nations Publications (ODS publications).

C. Electronic dissemination of information

25. The electronic dissemination of information is of increasing importance to UNDP from both programme and public affairs standpoints. On the programme side, computer-based initiatives such as the Sustainable Development Networking Programme are making development information accessible to ever-larger numbers of people in an ever-growing range of locations.

26. With regard to public information, the UNDP home page on the Internet (http://www.undp.org) provides access to various types of information on UNDP through web pages created by the different bureaux and divisions. Also, in his Direct Line No. 9 communication of 28 June 1996 to all Resident Representatives, the Administrator encouraged each of the 134 UNDP country offices to establish a web site and some 20 offices have now done so.

27. DPA has prepared interim guidelines for the development of web sites and the posting of information on the Internet. It regularly posts materials such as UNDP FLASH! (English, French and Spanish), the UNDP Mission Statement, two-pagers on the major focus areas of UNDP (with additional material on poverty), press releases and a list of available publications. It is currently working with the Division for Administrative and Information Services and change management team members who reviewed information management and communications to expand and improve the UNDP Internet presence.

IV. REVIEW OF THE STRATEGY

28. The Administrator has initiated the process of reviewing aspects of the strategy with particular regard to (a) the recommendations resulting from the UNDP-wide change management exercise, completed in late 1996, and (b) additional guidelines on publications, as emphasized in Executive Board decision 96/22.

A. Change management recommendations

29. The change management exercise reached four major conclusions on external communication and public affairs:

(a) Communication and advocacy are essential to let the public and UNDP stakeholders know about the role of UNDP in helping countries achieve SHD;

(b) Public affairs and advocacy are inextricably linked with resources mobilization;

(c) Creating an information and advocacy culture within UNDP is critical and must be embraced by all staff;

(d) Additional resources must be allocated for communication and advocacy at headquarters and in the field.

30. Constraints to external communication and public affairs identified through the change management exercise were: (a) unclear policy messages in written and oral communications, which are frequently jargon-ridden and lacking in hard facts; (b) uneven collaboration between DPA and line units; (c) a media-shy culture in UNDP as a whole; and (d) insufficient financial investment in communication.

31. Recommendations to address these constraints included:

(a) Identification of UNDP promotional messages, to be used by all UNDP staff in contacts with the media, and at seminars and other venues;

(b) Strengthening of linkages among staff working on policy, operational and media matters;

(c) Encouragement of all staff to invest time in developing and effectively communicating clear messages on the role of UNDP in development;

(d) Allocation of increased funding from the organizational budget for communication and advocacy efforts.

B. Additional policy guidelines on publications

32. The production and distribution of various types of publications will continue to be an essential part of UNDP work as it becomes an increasingly knowledge-based, learning organization. The Publications Board is now working on further policy guidelines for publications, looking closely at questions such as those raised in Executive Board decision 96/22, namely, prioritizing publications, given UNDP financial and human constraints; avoiding duplication with other United Nations publications; and expanding accessibility to UNDP publications and their language versions through electronic dissemination and other means.

33. In consultation with the relevant units within UNDP, it is intended to introduce a system under which a publications plan in line with the UNDP mandate, mission and goals, will be reviewed by the Executive Committee at the beginning of each calendar year. This plan will be drawn up in such a way that will allow flexibility within guidelines. Country offices will have delegated authority and maximum flexibility, with ex-post monitoring. The role of headquarters will be to facilitate exchange of country office publications and to ensure complementarity between the outputs of the various headquarters units. The details of the future UNDP publications policy are being discussed in the light of the change management exercise and through consultation within UNDP. Consultations will also be held informally with the Executive Board. The details of this policy will be reflected in a conference room paper to be made available to the Executive Board at its current session.

V. COST ESTIMATES OF PUBLICATIONS

34. Building on the publications policy outlined in the conference room paper, an assessment will be carried out, in consultation with the different units within UNDP, to analyse the cost of the production and distribution of UNDP publications. The results of this review will be taken into account by the Administrator during the development of the budget proposal for the biennium 1998-1999.

VI. EXECUTIVE BOARD ACTION

35. The Executive Board may wish to:

1. Take note of the information contained in the present report, together with information provided through informal consultations and in the conference room paper on publications;

2. Endorse the action taken by the United Nations Development Programme in response to decision 96/22;

3. Request the Administrator to report periodically on progress in developing and implementing the communication and information policy of the United Nations Development Programme.

Annex I

UNDP OFFICES WITH COMMUNICATION AND ADVOCACY RESPONSIBILITIES

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

BUREAUX FOR RESOURCES AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

- Division of Public Affairs - New York
- European Office - Geneva
- Liaison Office with the European Union in Brussels - Brussels
- Nordic Liaison Office - Copenhagen
- Washington Liaison Office - Washington, D.C.
- Tokyo Liaison Office - Tokyo

REGIONAL BUREAUX

BUREAU FOR PROGRAMME POLICY SUPPORT

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT OFFICE

OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

OFFICE FOR EVALUATION AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

SPECIAL UNIT FOR TCDC

UNDP COUNTRY OFFICES

UNDP-ADMINISTERED FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

- UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS
- UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN
- UNITED NATIONS CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT FUND
- UNITED NATIONS REVOLVING FUND FOR NATURAL RESOURCES EXPLORATION
- FUND TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT

Annex II

UNDP PERIODICALS

UNDP FLASH! (Arabic, English, French, Japanese, Russian, Spanish) 2 pages, weekly. Electronic news bulletin that reports on UNDP activities worldwide, including conferences, project approvals/developments, Administrator's speeches.

CHOICES (English, French, Spanish) 28 pages, quarterly. Illustrated magazine offering varied perspectives on topical development issues such as poverty, livelihoods, gender, environment, the urban crisis and the results of economic growth on a country's people.

Illustrated Annual Report (English, French, Spanish). Reports on latest UNDP policies and activities, providing hard data and illustrations.

Human Development Report (Arabic, English, French, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish). Annual report on the state of human development, prepared for UNDP by an independent team of development experts and published (in English) by Oxford University Press. Includes human development index ranking 173 countries. The 1997 report examines poverty. Previous reports have highlighted human freedom; trade; participatory and grass-roots development; security; ways to free resources for health, education and employment programmes; women and gender in development; relationship between economic development and human development.

Management Development in Progress (English) 4 pages. Quarterly newsletter reporting on UNDP-supported activities in management and governance (e.g., support for elections; an independent judiciary; bureaucratic accountability; freedom of information; public sector management; decentralization of decision-making and resource management; government interaction with organizations of civil society.)

UNSO Information Notes (English, French) 2-5 pages. Quarterly bulletin reporting on progress in the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification at the country level.

UNV NEWS (English, French, Spanish). 32 pages. Quarterly newsletter that describes United Nations Volunteer and other volunteer and development activities and trends.

Annex III

UNDP PUBLICATIONS BOARD: TERMS OF REFERENCE

Membership

The Chairman (Director, DPA)

The Secretary (Chief, Editorial and Publications Branch, DPA)

One member and one alternate from each of the following, designated by the respective heads of Division, Bureau or Special Fund:

Office of the Administrator, Bureau for Finance and Administration, Bureau for Resources and External Affairs, Human Development Report Office, Office of Development Studies, Office of Evaluation and Strategic Planning, Regional Bureau for Africa, Regional Bureau for Arab States, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, Special Unit for TCDC, United Nations Capital Development Fund, United Nations Development Fund for Women

Other Divisions whose publications are to be discussed by the Board are represented before it by their executive officers or other appropriate officials.

The Board may also invite senior officers of Divisions not represented on it to assist it in an advisory capacity.

External consultant to the Board: Oxford University Press

Functions

Determines and ensures the implementation of UNDP policies governing the preparation, production, distribution and sale of publications.

Reviews plans for the preparation, production and distribution of publications submitted by various Bureaux or Divisions of UNDP.

Determines whether a publication should be subject to an internal and/or external peer review.

Coordinates among those within UNDP who issue publications to ensure high quality, avoid duplication and maintain a uniform corporate image.

Advises on distribution, coordinating closely with the Division of Administration and Information Services/DPA Audience Data and Distribution System.

Reports to the Administrator as appropriate, making such recommendations as are deemed necessary.

In consultation with DAIS, seeks to determine the most effective mechanism for distribution of the publication (printing, Internet, etc.)